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30 MAR 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

THROUGH

: Office of General Counsel  
Deputy Director for Support   31 MAR 1964  
Deputy Director for Science and Technology

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SUBJECT

: Security Considerations in the Event of Major  
Alteration or Dissolution of the NRO

1. This memorandum is for information only.
2. In reference to the current Baker Panel study of the operations of the NRO, the DD/S&T has raised the question of a possible split in the NRO functions between the Air Force and CIA. The security ramifications of such a possibility have been studied and the following observations are made:
  - a. Possible proposition that the central control authority of the NRO be reduced and the CIA and the Air Force operate their programs independently. The Agency could operate its end of the program without security difficulty and in accordance with our standard covert operating procedures. It is felt, however, that the Director's responsibility for establishing security policy of the NRO program should be maintained in order to assure proper protection of the program as a principal source and method of intelligence.
  - b. Possible proposition that the NRO be dissolved and the Agreement of 2 May 1962, superseded by the 13 March 1963 Agreement, be abrogated with the Agency and Air Force developing their separate programs and capabilities in the fields of both overhead reconnaissance and manned aircraft reconnaissance. In this circumstance the Agency could adequately provide security for covert operations as had been done in the past. There exists, however, a serious question

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as to whether the Air Force could provide adequate security for covert programs of this nature both from an organizational-operational standpoint and from a legal standpoint. Any deficiencies in the Air Force program of this nature would have a bearing on the security of the Agency operations in the same general field. With the abrogation of the current NRO agreement, the DCI would not be in the same legal position to establish security policy for overhead reconnaissance programs and certainly, there would not be the direct control over the release of information as exists today in the NRO program. The Director's authority in establishing security policy and controls is enhanced by the NRO agreement and this in effect becomes commanding on the participating departments and agencies. On the other hand, if this agreement is abrogated, the basis for effective security control is removed and the Director's responsibility alone without an agreement is an insufficient answer to influence and maintain the present state of security. A separate agreement relating to security policy alone could continue the present control and in view of the successful and cooperative experience in this field, should be sought.

SIGNED

R. L. Bannerman  
Director of Security

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R. L. Bannerman, Director of Security

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